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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSY-02 HA-05 /073 W
----------100576 250037Z /23
R 240902Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5813
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZ
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3849

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJ: CONTROVERSY OVER PRESIDENTTIAL ROLE GROWS

REF: (A) LISBON 3712 (B) LISBON 3120 (C) LISBON 3778

SUMMARY: THE CENTER DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST PARTY
GOVERNMENT PARTIES HAVE BOTH COMPLAINED ABOUT THE MORE
ASSERTIVE ROLE OF PRESIDENT EANES. TENSIONS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE AN
EVOLVING SYSTEM IN WHICH BOTH THE PRESIDENT
AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE SUBSTANTIAL POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES.
END SUMMARY.
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1. CDS COMPLAINS: CDS PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL AND
CDS FOREIGN MINISTER SA MACHADO IN MAY 19 STATEMENTS TO THE
PRESS CHARACTERIZED THE VISIT OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL
MEMBER MELO ANTUNES TO ANGOLA ON A PRESIDENTIAL MISSION
(REF C) AS UNACCEPTABLE "PARALLEL DIPLOMACY." CDS VICE
PRESIDENT AMARO DE COSTA TOL THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM MAY

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19 THAT THE CDS HAD ENRED THE GOVERNMENT AT THE URGING

OF THE PRESIDENT AND WAS NOW FRUSTRATED THAT THE PRESIDENT
WAS NOT GIVING THE REQUISITE SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT.
AMARO DA COSTA WAS CONCERNED THAT THE PRESIDENT
MIGHT BE SEEKING A CHANGE FROM THE "SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL" SYSTEM
TO A "GAULLIST PRESIDENCY". FOLLOWING A MAY 20 MEETING, THE
CDS POLITICAL COMMITTEE STATED:
--THE SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM REQUIRES THE ACTIVE INTER-
VENTION OF THE PRESIDENT IN THE CONDUCT OF
POLICY IN HARMONY WITH A GOVERNMENT OF HIS CONFIDENCE. THE
GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE A PARLIAMENTARY BASE OF SUPPORT.
--THE CDS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT PRESIDENT EANES.
--THE CDS SUPPORTS FREITAS DO AMARAL'S REPUDIATION OF
PARALLEL DIPLOMACY.

2. SOCIALISTS UPSET: SOCIALIST PARTY INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY
RUI MATEUS ALSO COMPLAINED UBOUT RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS
IN A MAY 20 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF. MATEUS SAID THAT
SOARES, WHILE PUBLICLY BACKING EANES, WAS MUCH
CONCERNED OVER RECENT ACTIONS BY THE PRESIDENT. THESE INCLUDED:
--EANES'S DECISION TO PERMIT THE RETURN OF FORMER PRESIDENT
AMERICO TOMAS, TAKEN WHILE SOARES WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
--EANES'S DECISION TO SEND MELO ANTUNES ON A PRESIDENTIAL
MISSION TO ANGO WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT.
--EANES'S PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT DURING A
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RECENT VISIT IN THE PROVINCES.
--EANES'S CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT IN HIS APRIL 25
SPEECH. MATEUS SAID THAT EANES WAS BEING ENCOURAGED TO
TAKE A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSTURE BY FORMER AGRICULTURE
MINISTER ANTONIO BARRETO, THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY STAFF
OF THE PRESIDENCY INCLUDING HENRIQUE GRANADEISO, AND
GOVERNMENTAL CRITIC AND HISTORIAN VASCO PULIDO VALENTE
WHO, ACCORDING TO MATEUS, WROTE THE APRIL 25 SPEECH.
SOARES AND AMARAL HAD LET THE PRESIDENT KNOW IN
RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH EANES THAT THEY WOULD
NOT REMAIN IN GOVERNMENT IF THE PRESIDENT UNDERCUT THEM.

3. COMMENT: TENSIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENCY AND THE
GOVERNMENT ARE NATURAL TO AN EVOLVING SYSTEM IN WHICH
BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNEMTN HAVE POLICY
RESPONSIBILITIES (REF A). EANES, WHO AT TIMES IN THE PAST
OBSERVED GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION FROM THE
SIDELINES, IS NOW USING THE MANS AVAILABLE TO HIM TO INCREASE
HIS ROLE IN FOREIGN POLICY AND OTHER AREAS. THIS MAKES
THE COALITION PARTNERS NERVOUS AND WILL CONTINUE TO
PROVOKE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT.
BLOOMFIELD

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